
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	450-452 K Street, NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent
Meeting Date:	May 26, 2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New construction
Case Number:	11-143	<input type="checkbox"/> Addition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Alterations
Staff Reviewer:	Tim Dennée	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised concept

The applicant, Jemal's K Street Lot LLC (Douglas Development Corporation) with Kettler and R2L Architects PLLC, requests the Board's review of a concept to construct a thirteen-story residential building (with ground-floor retail, a second-story cyber café, and a green roof) on this T-shaped lot, now occupied by a parking lot. Parking and loading would occur off 30-foot-wide Prather's Alley at rear. The property is flanked by two- and three-story, red-brick, residential and commercial buildings dating between 1873 and 1906.

At the March hearing, the Board unanimously supported the general height, massing and materials and requested further development to address handful of issues including projecting balconies, the details of the base, refining the "tower" over the entrance and providing some relief to the east elevation.

The applicant has presented revised drawings. The packet includes multiple drawings showing the development of the elevations over time, so it is the last drawing of each elevation that is the latest and that now proposed by the applicant.

The façade has been given a stronger rhythm of bays, and the rooftop tower element over the entrance has been de-emphasized. The principal gesture marking the entrance is the rendering of the easternmost piece of the façade mostly glazed, with the vertical emphasized by a steel and glass bay that echoes the brick ones.

The projecting balconies have been removed from the rear bar of the building, an improvement. There are still, of course, inset terraces on the alley side of the building. And although there are still several balconies on the façade of the building, these are now engaged with the bays on either side and will not be steel-cage-like cantilevers.

The deep east elevation has been given some relief.

The penthouses and attached pergolas have actually increased somewhat in extent.

The base of the building's facade is improved, but its top should not be interrupted by the window openings of the third floor. Given the height of the openings in the base, the width of the piers, and the mass of the building above, the entablature is already minimal in proportion.

The terraces in the corner "towers" have been filled in with glazing. This undercuts the compositional logic for larger openings at the top of the building; as merely larger windows, they become a reversal of the traditional hierarchy of elements. There is an attempt to maintain the pattern of glazed upper stories sandwiched between towers/bays on the east elevation, but it falls apart there and is unsuccessful. The nearly random pattern of window mullions in the two upper floors is also not an improvement over the previous, more regular scheme.

The applicant is conferring with the City Archaeologist regarding any necessary investigation of the property. As some Board members may recall, this historic district was designated not only for its standing structures but also for its archaeological potential, given the history of industrial uses and Civil War-era residential occupation of Prather's alley.

The staff recommends that the approve the project in concept and delegate to staff further review to address the remaining issues.